

VENDORS PAY 50¢

PER PAPER

ALBERTA Street News

Volume 15

Issue 2

February 2018

Happy Valentines Day



Papers are sold by donation.

ALBERTA STREET NEWS

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Alberta Street News vendors
Harvey and Lorna
by John Zapantis

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**THE VIEWS
PRESENTED ARE THOSE
OF THE CONTRIBUTORS.**



International Network of Street Papers by the numbers

INSP is made up of over 100 street papers in 34 countries, published in 24 languages. The global movement is supported by more than 2,000 volunteers worldwide.

The vendors

- The network has supported almost 300,000 marginalised people since the first street paper was published in 1989.
- There are 9,300 vendors selling street papers at any one time.
- Over the last year more than 21,000 people have earned an income by selling a street paper.

The street papers

- In the last year, 24 million street papers were sold across the world.
- the street paper network speaks to 5.5 million readers worldwide.
- Last year, vendors earned a grand total of £30 million.

Papers provide employment for Alberta Street News Vendors

By Linda Dumont

Alberta Street News has roughly 20 vendors - some work only periodically, others take long breaks then start selling again. Currently papers are distributed from MacDonald Lofts, but they will be closed by April of 2018. We are seeking another distribution site for the papers. Vendors will be notified at MacDonald Lofts. I will be taking over distribution at another site. Call Linda at 780-428-0805 for more information.

In addition, vendors can buy papers from Angelique at the Strathcona Farmer's Market on Saturdays.

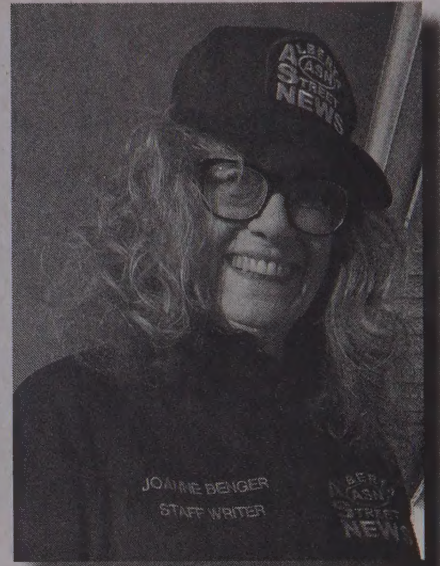
The paper has undergone a change, and I am hoping this is temporary. Because at present the only money coming in is very limited - paper sales to vendors and in this issue two small ads so I have had to reduce printing costs, to lessen the balance I have to pay. BUT because street papers are there for the vendors, when a street paper folds it means unemployment for the vendors. Quitting is not an option.

Over the past 14 years, I have seen many other street newspapers come and go. Many start with money from a grant then cease when that money is gone. Others, like Alberta Street News depend on volunteers, and when that volunteer is no longer able to continue to commit to producing a paper, the paper folds.

We need a large non profit society to take on the printing and mangement of the paper like the Bissell Centre did when they published Our Vocie between 2003 and 2014, or , barring that, a major benefactor!!

February Highlights

By Joanne Bengert



1. In North America more people die in January and February than in any other months. Congratulations if you are reading this. You have survived January. There is only one more dangerous month to complete. Good luck and take care. I hope we are both still reading in March. The good news is life expectancies keep going up. The Western Canadian Lottery Corporation thinks the average gambler will reach 91. If young folk win the Set for Life they will get \$1000 a week for 25 years. But those of us who reach 91 before the 25 years are up will get a lump sum instead. If you are already 91, don't worry. If you look at statistics you will see there aren't many people dying after the age of 91.

2. February is Apple Month, Black History Month, Friendship Month, Heart Month, Jump Rope for the Heart Month, Psychology Month, and Adopt a Rabbit Month among other things. Celebrate your cause.

3. The first week of February has been White Cane Week since 1946. Help. help those with no vision or low vision. It is also Eating Disorder Awareness Week. Since October, 2015 the Canadian Medical Association has recognized obesity as a chronic disease. Right now over half of all Canadians are overweight or have obesity. See the person, not the weight. People with obesity should be treated with the same respect as people with other chronic diseases such as heart disease or cancer.

4. February 4 is World Cancer Day. 80,000 Canadians will die of cancer this year. Join a group like Stand Up to Cancer.

5. February 7 is Alberta Winter Walk Day. On this special day Albertans are encouraged to walk at least fifteen minutes outside. In 2017, 120,000 Albertans took part. Make that 120,001. I never registered my walk. February 7 is also Ballet Day. If you can't get outside, dance inside.

6. February is an everything month. If dining is your thing, February 9 is National Pizza Day. February 22 is National Margarita Day and February 24 is National Tortilla Day. Enjoy.

7. February 13 is Oil and Gas Celebration Day because crude oil was discovered at Leduc on Feb. 13, 1947.

8. February 16 is the Lunar New Year celebrated in China, Korea and Vietnam. This year we are entering the Year of the Dog. You are a dog if you were born in 1910, 1922, 1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994 or 2006 as are babies born in 2018. Dogs are loyal and honest people who are generous and work well with others. On the negative side they can be critical of those who aren't up to their standards. Dogs have the best relationships with the horse (1906 and every 12 years after that), the tiger (1902 and every 12 years after that) and the Hare (19032011). Dogs should avoid the Dragon (1904.....2012) and the Ram (1907..... 2015).

9. February 14 is Valentine's Day and many people celebrate the week surrounding it with Random Acts of Kindness Week. Do good by stealth. Sometimes people need money and material goods.

10. February 19 is Family Day in Alberta, Ontario and Saskatchewan. It is celebrated in three other provinces with different names. Prince Edward Island calls it Islander Day, Manitoba calls it Louis Riel Day and Nova Scotia calls it Heritage Day. Heritage Day is also celebrated in the Yukon but on February 23. British Columbia celebrates Family Day on February 12.

11. February 28 is the day to celebrate your life. You have lived through the two deadliest months of the year and you are still alive. Isn't that great!

Make a donation or place an ad to help keep Alberta Street News in print. \$642 pays for one issue. Call 780 428-0805

The word disability is a myth

When actions speak for words

By John Zapantis

People who live with disabilities quite often are labelled by a biased public and can often be affected by the ignorance of others but that theory is out the window as far as Paula and her mother Jane are concerned. Paula, 29, was diagnosed at birth for Downs Syndrome, and thanks to her mother's loving support along with the good people at Winder Inclusive Communities Services (W.I.C.S), the energetic and productive young woman currently works at two part-time jobs that provide her with empowerment and respect while servicing her customers needs.

Paula was born in a small community in Ontario. She currently lives at home with her mother in Sherwood Park, Alberta. Her mother insisted that we not publish the families last name in this issue for our story.

In a recent interview with ASN, at times Paula's mother Jane acted as an interpreter for her daughter. Just recently Paula completed a program at WICS.

WICS is a helpful organization that assists people with disabilities to find gainful employment and connect with the general communities while encouraging newly developing friendships that can last a lifetime. Whatever the need, the organization believes in providing inclusiveness for those who need their support in becoming successful and productive citizens in their respective communities.

Despite some obstacles experienced in her life, Paula's mother has been very supportive in providing her with a good quality of life. Today, thanks to Winder Inclusive Communities Services, she has been successfully placed in two part-time positions, working both at Carters, a store that specialize in baby clothing retail sales and at Safeway.

After completing the intake at WICS and being assessed, along with her mother and a WICS representative, Paula went to seek employment availability at both Carters and Safeway. She successfully secured employment with both companies.

Her mother was instrumental in encouraging her self-confidence while being designated as a helicopter mom,

constantly hovering around her daughter, encouraging her in maintaining a positive outlook in her determination to meet her daughter's needs.

Since securing employment at both Carters where she is dressing mannequins and Safeway where one of her responsibilities includes placing food baskets in their proper rows, her mother takes pride in her milestone achievements.

Jane said, "There have been so many milestones that she's met that have just blown us away and have inspired us. Every milestone had more meaning, even though it might have been a little later than other kids, but every milestone had even more meaning than we could have ever imagined volunteering."

There have been many obstacles to overcome in the Paula's life. The obstacles created many challenges for her when she was a student in elementary school, where her programs were modified for her because at times she struggled to understand the courses taught to her. Despite some difficulty in working at her studies that was just the calm before the storm. She had some rude awakenings for her during her teen years. She experienced two heart surgeries and at 15 and was diagnosed with cancer and successfully beat the disease through treatment.

After her successful recoveries, her mother buckled down to the grindstone and continued encouraging her daughter's drive in developing a winning and positive outlook on life. Jane said, "Paula had cancer, when she was 15, and has overcome that ever since. Then we realized the importance and significance of making her dreams come true, not ours. Paula's always wanted to work and move out."

While finally making her breakthrough in working two successful jobs, Paula, often dreams of moving out on her own and making her dreams come true, Paula said, "I think I was looking to moving out with supportive room mates. I was looking forwards to doing things by myself and moving out. I always looked forwards to having my wishes come true."

After completing high school, she enrolled at Grant MacEwan and studied special needs for children. She successfully

completed her program as a Special Needs Education Assistant, obtaining a diploma for her specialized training.

The course was a 4 year program that she participated in from 2009 to 2013.

That program taught her an array of helpful skills that encouraged her success in preparing for the workforce.

Paula said, "I learned to love children and to baby sit them and always feel like hugging them. I had taken child development and secondly I studied computers and I took integration seminars."

Since her success at working at her job at Carters where she's been since 2014, she's maintained great relations with staff and clients who love interacting with her while getting help needed while shopping for their product lines.

In 2014 her self-confidence and success working as a store clerk at Carters encouraged her to successfully find work at Safeway in Sherwood Park. She now divides her time between her new job and her first part-time position at Carters.

While working as a bag clerk at Safeway, she loves the interaction experienced at the cash till with the many friendly customers that love popping in to chat with her. Her mother attributes her success at securing her second job at Safeway to her previous experiences while working at Carters.

Jane said, "Due to those tasks that she learned at Carters, she was able to get this job at Safeway. She really started and moved off the very first day. She caught on so quickly, because of all the experiences she had with Carters, a bit of a simpler experience and now she is able to do more complicated things. Now at Safeway, she just took off from the floor and was flying. That's really been a success story. She is learning jobs and taking off on a new job and keeping the other job, too. She has two jobs."

These days there's also a boyfriend in her life named Adam Falkner. The compatible pair have been together for five years. She'd like to spend more time with him and has plans on setting out independently and finding a place of her own one day.

One thing assured, Paula has come a

a long ways, since her earlier days while struggling with her studies in elementary school, her two heart surgeries, a battle with cancer and her long term climb to prove those wrong about not ever reaching her dreams. Paula's mother speaks proudly about how her daughter's success in the workplace left a positive impact on everyone.

Jane said, "Well she's very proud that she makes her own money. She can buy her own things that she would like. She's proud when she does an exceptional job. She loves to greet the public. She's very proud that she's the same as her brother and sister, who also have jobs and contribute to society and help people. (Her mother looks over briefly at Paula in our interview and says to her daughter, while letting out some laughter) And you really do help



Winder Inclusive Communities Co-founder and Executive Director Buddy Winder, WICS Team Leader Tessa Lawlor, Administrative, Assistant Francis Kabigting and Team Leader Amanda Lawlor. Photo by John Zapantis

people. - I think that's what she likes the best. She likes seeing people, this and asking people what they need, impacting on other people just like everyone else."

Just as Winder Inclusive Communities Services has been notable for making communities inclusive for the people that

they represent, so Paula, when working her two jobs at Carters and Safeway, is making it just as inclusive for her customers with that infectious smile and charm and know how-The Paula Way!

Winter survival tips

By Joanne Benger

The following survival tips have been compiled from unreliable sources. Use at your own risk.

1. Put cotton in your ears to keep the wax flowing.
2. Use a pencil for writing outdoors. Ball-point ink freezes.
3. If you can't afford long johns, wear a wool sweater and thick leggings.
4. If it is icy push a shopping cart or grab a companion.
5. Petroleum jelly keeps you warm. Rub some on your hands before you put on your mitts for warmer hands. Smear Vaseline on your face to keep it warm.
6. If you have no mittens wear socks on your hands.
7. Catch a chicken and put your hands under its wings to warm up your cold hands.
8. If sleeping on the street lay out cardboard and lie with your legs together. Remove your arms from your sleeves and keep them warm next to your body.
9. To secure boots when sleeping rough, get twine. Tie one end to each boot's top lace hole and the other end to your belt or belt loop.

10. Anything wet freezes to anything made of cold metal. Take care with sweaty palms.
11. Whiskey and gasoline stay liquid at very cold temperatures. Whiskey can freeze your throat and gasoline can freeze your hands.
12. Your breath shows as a white cloud below 7 degrees. Put snow in your mouth and your breathe won't show if you are hiding.
13. To prevent your lungs from freezing breathe through a scarf or smoke a cigarette.
14. Blow into your mitts to warm you hands.
15. Put red pepper in your boots to keep your feet warm.
16. Winter boots should be a size or two too big so you can have room for several pairs of warm socks.
17. If your boots are wet or leaking, cover your warm socks with a bread bag before putting on your boots and your feet will stay dry.
18. If you have no socks make old fashioned toe rags. take long strips of wool and wrap around your feet and ankles mummy style.
19. If your jacket is too thin wear newspa-

- per or dried grass under it for insulation.
20. On sunny winter days wear sunglasses to prevent snow blindness.
21. Layer clothes and take care not to get too hot and sweat for you'll get chilled when the sweat freezes.
22. When choosing your jacket, remember down is warmest when dry but coldest if it gets wet. Wool will keep you warm even when it is wet.
23. Wear winter boots. Running shoes often have soles that get stiff when cold and cause you to slip.
24. If you are well hydrated and well fed you can handle the cold better and are less likely to get hypothermia.
25. If cold, duck into a public washroom and use the electric hand dryer to warm yourself up.
26. Always wear a toque of acrylic or wool for warmth. Wool is better if you get wet.
27. Mittens are warmer than gloves because your fingers can share body heat.
28. To warm your hands carry a jar of hot water in your pocket and replace as it cools off. Or fill a large bottle with hot water to put under your blankets overnight.

Whose streets are they anyway?

By Allan Sheppard

Greetings from Toronto, the biggest of Canada's Big Smokes (the others being Vancouver and Edmonton: Wikipedia). I've been here for four weeks. Family duties keep me close to my suburban home away from home, but I've had opportunities to go downtown. On one of them, I joined a meeting of Friends and Families for Safe Streets (FFSS).

FFSS was formed in 2016 as a support and advocacy group for relatives, friends, and survivors of road violence. The group uses the term "road violence" advisedly, arguing that the until recently more common term, "accident," minimizes the impact on victims and survivors and deflects searches for causes; that is, accountability and prevention. Members also prefer "crash" to the more neutral "collision," which can imply equivalence of power and consequences—seldom the case between motorists and cyclists or pedestrians.

Insisting on the need for precise, non-judgemental language is not pedantic quibbling by a special interest group. Language influences how we respond to and think about things. Opponents to the use of technology to enforce traffic regulations refer to photo radar and red-light cameras as "cash cows" introduced by authorities to extract money from innocent (when not caught) motorists. The terms "safety radar" and "safety cameras" are more reflective of the purpose and value of such tools. I remember an occasion, a few decades ago, when a casual acquaintance referred to a speeding ticket as a "licence to speed." And so it was at the time. Authorities put a stop to that kind of scofflawry by adding demerit points to monetary penalties, entailing loss of driving privileges for driving too fast too often. Or blowing too many stoplights.

But that doesn't apply to safety radar and cameras; demerit points are not awarded, presumably because the technology cannot identify drivers reliably enough to make awarding them fair or reasonable. Which leaves us in licence-to-break-laws—some might say licence-to-kill—territory: frustrating and embarrassing perhaps, but not an unreasonable attack on rights and

freedoms.

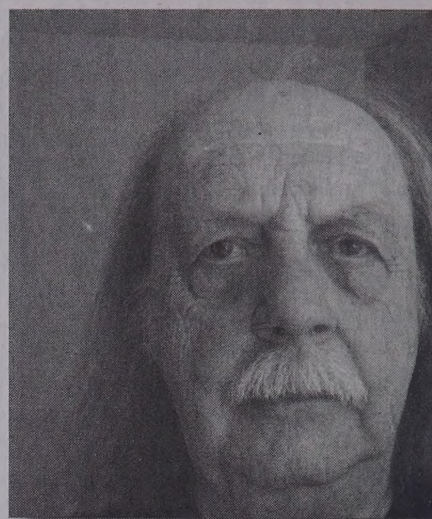
Drivers who cry cash cow against enforcement through technology seem to want to have their cake and eat it: to have the freedom to break traffic laws that are intended to promote the safety of everyone who uses streets, sidewalks, and roads (for which they can buy retroactive licences) and the right not to be subject to strict, technologically enhanced, enforcement. But I digress.

FFSS members advocate a zero-tolerance approach to road violence, not just in terms of ending deaths and serious injuries on streets and roads, but also in terms of behaviours and design flaws that have been shown to cause crashes.

One of the three FFSS founders, Yu Li, expresses the concern this way, as summarized in the 25 October 2016 issue of the *Toronto Star*: most collisions are the result of negligence, either by drivers or by planners who designed unsafe streets." Although Li did not mention it in his interview, negligence in the design of vehicles can also be a factor.

Skeptics argue that pedestrians and cyclists are negligent too. That might be true sometimes, but cases in which inattention or negligence of cyclists and pedestrians is the sole, or even primary, cause of a crash are relatively few, compared to cases where inattention or negligence by drivers is the paramount cause. Yet it is a rare case indeed, when a cyclist or pedestrian is killed or seriously injured by road violence, that the driver does not blame the victim by pointing to something that the cyclist or pedestrian did wrong or did not do right.

A moving vehicle is a deadly weapon, equivalent to a loaded gun, and given that reality, the onus lies most heavily on drivers to give full attention and care. The alternative is to proclaim, with the good-old-boys of our world, that might makes right, on the street as everywhere else: "If you can't run with the big dogs, stay on the porch." That attitude, asserted by Toronto's late mayor, Rob Ford, and his perhaps would-be-mayor brother Doug, amounts to usurpation of public space for private purposes, and damn the consequences—or reasonable objections. Streets and roads are meant



for cars, trucks, and buses; cycle or walk on them at your own risk. Any injury you might suffer is collateral damage or your own fault.

Advocates suggest that vehicular assaults have much in common with sexual assaults. The defence against charges for both is to blame the victim: questions about victims' "risky" behaviour, including reasons for being where they were when they were, what they were wearing, and past behaviour are all thrown against the wall of public and judicial opinion in the hope that something will stick, with cavalier disregard for the impact on survivors when most or all of it does not stick.

The rights of defendants are strongly entrenched in our legal system. Victims and survivors have no rights, except to give a brief statement before sentencing, if a defendant is found guilty. The victim has no representation in proceedings; prosecutors represent the law and society. The result can be painful, humiliating, infuriating. And there is little likelihood of change. Perhaps then the first value of groups like FFSS is not advocacy, necessary and valuable as that may be. FFSS's value is as a safe place for victims and survivors to share their feelings and experiences among people who have had similar experiences. I left the meeting wondering if a chapter of FFSS might find a home in Edmonton. In addition to sharing the same silly nickname, Edmonton and Toronto seem still to be in thrall to car culture. Both have Vision Zero plans on the books that have so far achieved little or no success.

If you agree Edmonton is ready for a support and advocacy group for families and friends of victims of road violence, let's meet. The journey can only begin if we take the first step.

Metamorphosis

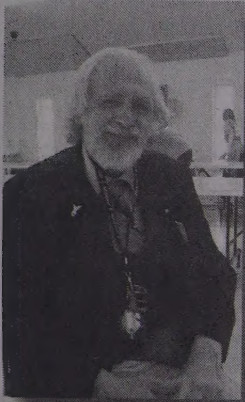
By Angelique Branston

Slowly and oh so painfully
The cocoon walls shudder and break apart
Like petals from a flower slowly shrivel up
Its flesh turning from a beautiful floral color to that of
muddy brown, and then slowly falling away.
Except this cocoon created safety from a storm that raged
with no regard for life.
And now the storm has past.

Peeking past the crumbling wall
To see the ruins of what the storm left behind
The countless lives forever irrevocably changed.
The stains and marks that can never be washed away,
never to be healed only managed
For there are some things that can never be undone.

Breath feels heavy.
Crawl back into the cocoon even as it shreds away.

The pain and fear is blinding
Like a sick or wounded animal
That segregates itself from the herd
Preferring the solitude which brings a kind of peace,
So am I.
The remains of the cocoon disappear in the gentle wind
that blows
I stand defenceless
My battle scars made glaringly obvious in the unfiltered
light.
Every sensation magnified.
Freedom means pain
Healing brings pain, like a burn victim whose seared flesh
needs to be torn away
To make room for the flesh that will grow
Like the flowers that bloom after a wild fire.
My wings are far too new and fragile.



You can help those in need

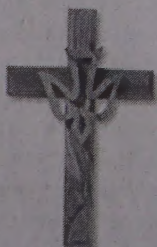
By Pedro Schultz.

I appreciate what all of you are doing for my homeless friends and want to make some suggestions and a caution: donations of fruit, nuts, carrots, chocolate and candy (addicts love sweets), socks, underwear, gloves, sweaters and jackets, good tracts and other Christian publications especially Bibles, toques, blankets, sheets of plastic, (such as mattress covers) for when it rains, hot dogs, hamburgers, soup, scarves, bus tickets juice, bottled water etc., or better yet give your most prized possession ---your time. Listen to them, try to understand them and try to discover both their felt and real needs. Offer them a basin of water to wash their hands or feet, offer to allow them to take a shower somewhere, or a place to sleep.

I haven't had a bad experience in housing, or feeding people more than 200 times since 1992. Offer them ride to church, a homeless shelter, a library or drive them to the corner of 103A Ave. and 95 Street any day at 6 pm for free food and clothes. CHRIST

commands us to love our neighbour as ourselves and gave the example of the Good Samaritan to reveal who that is. Christ promises to reward even a cup of water and said he considers what we do or not do to our fellow man as having been done to him.

A caution is, guard your money. One day I offered a drug addicted prostitute a meal at a restaurant at 10 p.m. When the waiter told me to pay for the meal in advance, as I attempted to pay she grabbed my wallet and ran out the door. The only way I was able to get it back was by giving her \$20. I forgave her and still pray for her. Please do the same for me and all others.



J Jam

Just Jesus and Me
A Christian 12 Step program
7 p.m. Mondays
Salvation Army Church
95 Street-117 Avenue

First Nations Alliance Church

12235-50 Street T5W 3C7

780 691-7644

Sunday Service - 12:45, Sunday

School age 4 and up

Bible Study - 7-9 p.m. Wed.

Ladies Bible Study - 1-3 p.m. Tues.

Everyone Welcome

Let our voice be heard

By Maria B.

Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and in particular without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

Our limitations do not seem from "our disability", but rather from the stereotyping that leads to stigmatizing and discrimination in our community.

It is not possible for us to influence any long term changes in stigmatizing behaviour unless "we" have the awareness and the courage to challenge people's beliefs. Whenever we accept the designation that shatters who we are in the eyes of our creator, we are adopting the title that only serves to keep us in a stigmatized and shameful state.

Our strength comes from within, from knowing that we are worthy individuals and we must hold on to the belief that even if we are different, we have the right to seek and live a truly fulfilling life.

We must embrace our differences. We must become the voice of awareness of the struggle that people with disabilities go through.

Change starts with each one of us.

We are not our disability, we have the unlimited skills and are quite able to thrive in a community but we need acknowledgement, support and most of all "equality".

Of all human weaknesses, none is more destructive to the dignity of the individual than stigma, stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination.

I have suffered with the problem of Dystonia of the vocal chords for 31 years, and I have been scared. I have been embarrassed. I have met prejudice and blatant discrimination but at the same time I will say that I have met people that have treated me with the respect that I truly deserve.

Dystonia is not something that you can see on a person but as soon as I speak you would know there is something wrong. I have blessed my accent as a lot of times people just think it is my heavy accent.

My Dystonia started after my young-



est daughter was sexually molested. She went through hell and at first it was very hard for me to know what she was going through as I did not know the effects of sexual abuse.

The first thing that I did was that I went to the library and took out about six books on the subject. While I was learning about the subject, I was opening many memories of my childhood that contained sexual abuse. I was able to reach my older sister and ask her about a person, and before even me telling her about myself, she told me that this person had sexually molested her. It is not easy to unclog these feelings as you are not aware what to do with them - the anxiety, the helplessness that I felt was horrible. Suddenly I was not only helping my daughter but I was going through what happened to her.

Through the process I lost the ability to speak properly but in the process my daughter regained her voice and she has been an incredible advocate for victims on the subject.

We can not change what happens to us but what we can do is realize that sexual assault is not our fault. It is the perpetrator's fault, Society has taught us that we have to take responsibility for what happens to us but I can tell you that being sexually assaulted is not the victim's responsibility, especially between an adult and a child.

Being sexual assaulted changes your life completely. You carry what happened to you for the rest of your life. It changes who you are meant to be but I tell you I

feel good been able to speak about it. I carried my secret for such a long time but I made sure that the person that sexually molested my child paid for what he did. Unfortunately what we have as a Justice System does not make justice for the victims. These perpetrators get away with so much. At the same time I see my daughter - how strong she is. She is an incredibly compassionate person and I am glad she has ceased carrying what happened to her as a burden.

Sometimes some of the most horrid things teach us very hard lessons. When this happened I believed my daughter and I did everything I needed to do to help her. Many parents decide not to want to believe the child. I must say that it is incredibly important for parents to believe their children and do whatever they have to do to deal with the issue appropriately. Children need their mothers to help them deal with this situation. This is something that children should not keep silent and carry for the rest of their lives. It is something that affects every aspect of your life, changes how you deal with other people and how you feel about yourself. It can destroy you.

For children their harbour is their parents. Make sure that the light you emanate is welcoming for your children in every way.

As parents we are the best models for our children. It is not what we tell them but how they see us act. My legacy to my children will be the fact that every one of them is aware of the incredible love that I have for them.